medical profession as well. As per information available, such tax is being levied by only about 20 States. The total collection is estimated at about Rs. 2,400 crores during 2004-05. The rates of tax vary from State to State within the overall ceiling of Rs. 2,500 per person per annum.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, the health care system in India is mainly manned by the private sector. Only one-third of the patients are provided with medical care in Government hospitals. Not only that, but in view of the Chikungunya, Dengue and other viral fevers, spreading all over India in rural areas, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, whether he is having any plans to exempt the rural professional from the professional tax.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, profession tax is levied by the State Government. This power is given to the State Legislature under the Constitution. Whether any particular profession should be exempted from profession tax is a matter for each State Legislature and State Government to decide. The Central Government does not levy any profession tax.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, all over India, many farmers are committing suicides. Distress is very much visible in the rural areas, and the reason found in many surveys is that the farmers are committing suicides not only because of distress sales, but also because of heavy commitment to the health care system. In view of that, I request the Minister whether they can direct the State Government to relieve them from profession tax.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, how is it in my power to direct a State Legislature or a State Government?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Brinda Karat, not here. Next Question; 184.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, I am here. It is very ominous that you have forgotten me, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 183.

Dwindling of ground water table

*183. SHRI SITARAM YECHURI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the ground water table is dwindling year by year;

(b) if so, the details of ground level water table between 2000 and 2005, State-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that the drawing of water higher then specified by Cola companies in various places is also a contributing factor for the lower level ground water tables;

(d) what is the difference between an Underground water table in the areas adjacent to Cola companies and other places in each States;

(e) whether this is contributing to the shortage of underground water for agricultural activities in those areas; and

(f) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to rectify this anomally?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) As per the assessment of ground water resources carried out in the year 2004 jointly by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and the States, out of 5723 ground water resource assessment units (block/ mandal/taluka), 839 assessment units are 'over-exploited' where in stage of ground water development is more than 100% and significant decline in long term trend of water level has been observed in either pre-monsoon or post-monsoon periods or both. 226 units are 'critical' wherein ground water development is more than 90% and upto 100% and significant decline is observed in long term trend of water level in both pre-monsoon and the post-monsoon periods. As per the ground water level monitoring carried out by CGWB, declining trend has been observed between 2000 and 2005 in isolated pockets in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal. State-wise details are given in the enclosed Statement. *(See* below).

(c) to (e) Decline in ground water levels in an area is cumulative effect of ground water withdrawal for all purposes including domestic, industrial as

well as agricultural sectors. CGWB monitors ground water levels on a regional basis and carries out assessment studies at watershed/block levels. Micro level monitoring of ground water level pertaining to Coal companies in each State is not done by the Board. However, a special study was carried out by CGWB in Plachimada village, Chittoor block, Palakkad district in Kerala and Kaladera village, Govindgarh block, Jaipur district in Rajasthan, where soft drink manufacturing factories are located. The main finding of the study is that agricultural pumpage is contributing the maximum for decline of ground water.

In Plachimada village of Kerala, ground water withdrawal for irrigation was found to be 92.6% of the total ground water withdrawal, whereas that for industry was 3.5%. In Chittoor block, maximum water level recorded was 11.6 metres below ground level (mbgl) whereas in Plachimada village, in Chittoor block, where Coca Cola factory is located maximum water level recorded was 7.7 mbgl.

In Kaladera village of Rajasthan, the ground water withdrawal for irrigation was 81.3% and that for industry was 12.6% of the total ground water withdrawal. In Govindgarh block, the maximum decline was 17 metres at village Itawa Bhopji, which is located far away from the Coca Cola Company. Around Kaladera industrial area, in Govindgarh block, decline of less than 10 metres in water level was observed during the same period.

(f) 'Water' being a State subject, action if any to check the quantum of ground water withdrawal by Cola companies is to be taken by the States. However, the Union Government/CGWB have also taken several remedial steps in this regard which *inter-alia* include the followings:—

(i) A report titled 'Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water' has been prepared which has identified a total of 4.5 lakh sq. km. area in the country needing artificial recharge of ground water. The document has been circulated to all the States/UTs for appropriate action.

(ii) The CGWB has circulated Manual/Guide on techniques of Artificial Recharge to Ground Water to the State/Union Territories to enable them to formulate area specific artifical recharge schemes to check the declining trend of ground water levels.

(iii) CGWB promotes rain water harvesting by conducting mass awareness/training programmes and provides technical guidance to various Government and Non-Government agencies.

(iv) Ministry of Water Resources has circulated a Model Bill to "Regulate and Control the Development and Management of Ground Water" to the States/Union Territories. The Model Bill has a separate chapter on "Rain Water Harvesting for Ground Water Recharge*.

(v) The Union Government has constituted "Artificial Recharge of Ground Water Advisory Council" under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of Water Resources in the Ministry of Water Resources, which has representation from various Ministries/Departments concerned with rain water harvesting, States/UTs, Financial Institutions, Industries/Public Undertakings as well as NGOs and renowned Subject Experts.

(vi) The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWB) has directed the Chief Secretaries of the concerned States to take all measures to adopt artificial recharge to ground water/promote rain water harvesting in all the over-exploited areas falling under their jurisdiction and ensure inclusion of roof top rain water harvesting in the building bye-laws.

(vii) CGWA has notified 20 severely over-exploited areas in the country for regulation of ground water development and management. The CGWA is also regulating development of ground water by new industries/projects in all over-exploited/critical areas.

Statement

Names of States where declining trend of ground water, in isolated pockets, observed by CGWB during 2000—2005

Sl. No	State	Remarks
1 2	Andhra Pradesh	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 296 Mandals. Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 7 Blocks. Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 43 Taluks. Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 66 Blocks. Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 68 Blocks.
3 4	Delhi	
5	Gujarat	
	Haryana	
	Karnataka	

Sl. No	State	Remarks
6	Kerala	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 20 Blocks.
7	Madhya Pradesh	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 29 Blocks.
8	Maharashtra	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 8 Blocks.
9	Punjab	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 108 Blocks.
10	Rajasthan	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 190 Blocks.
11	Tamil Nadu	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 175 Blocks.
12	Uttar Pradesh	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 50 Blocks.
13	Uttaranchal	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 2 Blocks.
14	West Bengal	Declining trends observed in isolated pockets of 1 Block.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Minister because he has given a fair amount of data and tried to allay our fears. But it appears to me that the Government instead of carrying out a comprehensive water balance analysis of these watersheds, has actually tied itself in knots. Pardon my saying it. My first supplementary, therefore, is: Will the Government ask the concerned Departments or your Ministry to conduct a micro level water balance analysis of all these concerned watersheds? Why I am asking you this, Sir, is because this is also an emotive issue. You and we have seen in the country very serious disturbances that have occurred as a result of apprehensions on this score. So, are you planning to conduct any micro-level analysis of these watersheds?

PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Sir, we are already conscious of monitoring and assessing the water level in various States. But we must appreciate the fact that even the Supreme Court has said in its judgements that within the sovereign India, our States are sovereign in respect of water resources. But we are not idle; because we have Ground Water Authority apart from Ground Water Board, and as recently as 2004-05, we conducted a survey and I have information available on the ground water level, which, in certain States, is depleting or going down. But the situation is not alarming. If you want me to become conscious of the fact that surveys should be conducted and monitoring should be done, I can assure you, and through the hon. Chairman the country, that we are conscious of the fact that ground water in India is receiving tremendous importance at this moment, under this Government.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY; Sir, thank you for that assurance. You have correctly said it. My second supplementary relates to the point that you have just raised, that is, local authorities. According to the Indian Constitution. I think, article 243©, the Legislature of a State may, by Law, endow the Panchayats with necessary powers and authority to function as an institution of self-Government. However, Sir, the reason why I am asking this specifically is, Kerala Pachayati Raj Act also allow an entrepreneur to appeal to the Government of Kerala against the decision of the Panchayat. Now, Sir, there is this ongoing disputes on the Plachimada Project of the Coca Cola unit. The issue is that legality somehow is very obfuscating. You have a dispute where there is depletion of ground water and there is contamination in the contents of water. Various NGOs have brought out these reports. Now, the question is that there are no standard norms or rules by which we can hold somebody responsible for this. Now, this dispute continuously keeps on taking a very, very serious toll in terms of social clashes that are taking place and, right now, I am sure the Minister and the Government are aware that there are these social tensions brewing in' various parts of the country, not only in Plachimada in Kerala. What is stopping the Government of India from declaring certain norms on the basis of certain surveys? Why don't you declare these norms so that we can give a level-playing field to all the entrepreneurs, to companies, to multinational corporations saying that these are the norms, these are the things that you have to follow; otherwise; you are not going to be allowed? Why can't we set that up?

PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Sir, this is being done rather meticulously. At the back of your mind is, perhaps, irrigation, irrigation is the paramount responsibility of my Ministry, and I can give you figures how irrigation is being treated. Yes, if the industry gets more water, that will be alarming; that will be at the cost of irrigation, and that can never be done. But as far the Coca Cola is concerned, my Ministry was some time back alerted by the Consultative Committee. So, there was a survey done in 5 industrial areas. That has been explained in the answer also. So, in respect of Coca Cola, we found, may be, they did it cleverly. They have drawn water where water was available and water level has not depleted in the surrounding areas. I have figures available. As far as the general part of your question is concerned, you have gone to the Constitution. Yes, the Constitution gives this Ministry the responsibility. But, sometimes, we are helpless because this is not in the Concurrent List, and it is not that easy to resolve

the disputes in the States because I have no authority to do so. But through consultation, through persuasion, we do quiet a lot. As far as the general question is concerned, you had referred to the Constitution. I want to give figures. Out of the net annual ground water availability 399.25 BCM, utilization of ground water is to the level of 230.62 BCM. Irrigation gets 89.5 per cent, domestic sector gets 5.7 per cent, industry gets just 3.9 per cent, and power gets 0.9 per cent. It should increase. But irrigation must remain in sharp focus.

As far as industry is concerned, we have to be conscious of the fact that industry cannot draw water at the cost of irrigation, and that is why I said that ground water is in sharp focus. The Prime Minister was kind enough to constitute an Artificial Recharge of Ground water Advisory Council recently to artificially re-charge the ground water. That Advisory Council is manned by topmost experienced experts like Dr. Swaminathan, Ms. Sunita Narayana and others. So, many recommendations have been implemented. Dr. Swaminathan has submitted a report very recently-More crop and drop of water. That has been done ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, I will take half a minute. For regulation of industries, there is a Committee looking into this, and we shall have comprehensive recommendations. Those recommendations will be placed before this august House.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, my question was: Is the Government considering the setting up of certain norms and standards on the basis of which it will be publicly known what you can do and what you cannot do so that such disputes will not arise?

PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: This section is being looked after by a separate Committee and those recommendations will come soon.

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी : श्रीमन, यह सवाल बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है। इसमें एक अंश यह पूछा गया था कि 2000 और 2005 के बीच भू-जल का राज्यवार ब्यौरा क्या था? लेकिन यह इस जवाब में नही आया कि हर राज्य में पहले भूतल के नीचे कितना जल मिलता था और अब कितना नीचे चला गया है। वाटर टेबल सब जगह नीचे जा रहा है। रिपोटर्स यह कहती है कि भूतल के नीचे उस जल का 1/7 से गया है, जो 10-15 साल पहले था। हरियाणा, उत्तर प्रदेश के पश्चिमी इलाकों में तथा कई जगहों पर लोग ट्यूबवैल लगाते है, लेकिन उनमें पानी नही मिलता। आप कहते है कि कुछ हुआ ही नही, सब कुछ बड़ा शांत है, बड़ी हरियाली है, लेकिन ऐसा तो दिखाई नही देता। जगह-जगह से रिपोटर्स आती है कि ट्यूबवैल खराब हो रहे है, क्योकि वाटर टेबल नीचे जा रहा है। मै यह जानना

चाहता हूं कि क्या मंत्री जी यह बताएंगे कि पिछले 10-15 सालों में कितना ग्राउंड वाटर नीचे अवैलेबल था और आज कितना है? वाटर टेबल औसत हिन्दुस्तान में कहां, कितना था और आज कितना है तथा उसका कृषि पर क्या परिणाम हो रहा है, यह जरा बताएंगे

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : मै अर्ज कर रहा हूं कि कुछ बातें आपने मेरे मुँह में लगाने की कोशिश की। मैंने यह नही कहा कि सब जगह ठीक-ठाक है।

†**پروفیسر سیف الدین سوز:** میں عرض کر رہا ہوں کہ کچھ باتیں آپ نے میرے منہ میں لگانے کی کوشش کی۔ میں نے یہ نہیں کہا کہ سب جگہ ٹھیک ٹھاک ہے۔

श्री सभापति : आपके मुंह में कुछ नही लग सकता। आप चिंता मत करें।

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : अर्ज यह है, मै बड़े भाई को बात रहा हूं कि मुझे सवाल का जवाब देना है। अब आपने सवाल किया है कि over a period of time क्या हुआ है, तो मेरे पास जो चार्ट है, उसके मुताबिक मै देख रहा हूं कि कुछ स्टेटस में जरुर चिंता रखनी चाहिए। जब मै कहता हूं कि कोई अलार्म नही है, तो मै पूरे कंट्री की बात बताता हूं कि हमारे पास पानी है और उसे एहतियात से खर्च करना चाहिए। ऐहतियात से खर्चना चाहिए। यह अलार्मिंग सिचुएशन नही है, लेकिन हर बारिश का कतरा संभाल कर रखना चाहिए। मेरे पास आंध्र प्रदेश, दिल्ली, गुजरात, हरियाणा, कर्नाटक, केरल, मध्य प्रदेश, महाराष्ट्र, पंजाब, राजस्थान, तमिलनाडु, उत्तर प्रदेश और वेस्ट बंगाल की फिगर्स है। इसके अनुसार साल 2000 से 2005 में क्या हुआ? तो वहां वाटर टेबल कुछ गिरा है और ऐसा पूरी कंट्री में है। मै फिगर बता सकता हूं। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

پروفیسر سیف الدین سوز: عرض یہ ہے، میں بڑے بھائی کو بتا رہا ہوں کہ مجھے سوال کا جواب دینا ہے۔ اب آپ نے سوال کیا ہے کہ over a period of time کیا ہوا ہے، تو میرے پاس جو چارٹ ہے، اس کے مطابق میں دیکھ رہا ہوں کہ کچھ اسٹیٹس میں ضرور چنتا رکھنی چاہئے۔ جب میں کہتا ہوں کہ کوئی الارم نہیں ہے، تو میں پورے کنٹری کی بات بتاتا ہوں کہ ہمارے پاس پانی ہے اور اسے احتیاط سے خرچ کرنا چاہئے۔ یہ الارمنگ سچویشن نہیں ہے، لیکن ہر بارش کا قطرہ سنبھال کر رکھنا چاہئے۔ میرے پاس اندھرا پردیش، دہلی، گجرات، ہریانہ، کرناٹک، کیرل، مدھیہ پردیش، مہاراشٹر، پنجاب، راجستھان، تمل ناڈو، اتر پردیش اور ویسٹ بنگال کی فیگرس ہیں۔ اس کے مطابق سال 2000 سے 2005 میں کیا ہوا؟ تو وہاں واٹر ٹیبل کچھ گرا ہے اور ایسا پوری کنٹری میں ہے۔ میں فیگر بتا سکتا ہوں۔...مداخلت...

†[] Transliteration in Urdu Script

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी : यह 2000 से 2005 में कितना था?

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : आप इनमें से किसी स्टेट का पूछ सकते है। इन स्टेटस में वाटर टेबल मुकाबलन गिर गया है। आप बताइए, आप किस स्टेट का जानना चाहते है? ...(**व्यवधान**)...

†**پرو فیسر سیف الدین سوز:** آپ ان میں سے کسی اسٹیٹ کا پوچھ سکتے ہیں۔ ان اسٹیٹس میں واٹر ٹیبل مقابلتاً گر گیا ہے۔ آپ بتائیے، آپ کس اسٹیٹ کا جاننا چاہتے ہیں۔ ...مداخلت...

श्री सभापति : राजस्थान के बारे में बता दीजिए। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी : आप इन सारी स्टेटस का बता दीजिए, क्योकि सभी स्टेट्स में पानी के लिए त्राहि-त्राहि है।

श्री सभापति : आप राज्यस्थान के बारे में बता दें।

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : राजस्थान में 20 से 26 मीटर लेबल पर जल था। अब यह वाटर लेवल 25.64 मीटर नीचे चला गया है।

†**پرو فیسر سیف الدین سوز:** راجستھان میں جو جل ہے وہ 20 سے 26 میٹر لیوں پر تھا۔ اب یہ واٹر لیول 64. 25 میٹر نیچے چلا گیا ہے۔

श्री सभापति : बचा क्या है?

श्री ललित किशोर चतुर्वेदी : सर, मै यह निवेदन कर रहा हूं।...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति : आप बैठ जाइए। मै एलाऊ नही कर रहा हूं। रिकॉर्ड पर नही जाएगा।...(**व्यवधान**).. आप निवेदन कुछ नही कर रहे है। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री ललित किशोर चतुर्वेदी : *

श्री सभापति : नही नही। रिकॉर्ड पर नही जाएगा, ललित जी। बिजनेस एड्वायजरी कमेटी ने तय किया है।

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : ऑनरेबल चेयरमैंन ने राजस्थान के बारे में पूछ लिया है। मै कंपेरिजन बता हूं, मसलन आंध्र प्रदेश में।

†**پرو فیسر سیف الدین سوز:** انریبل چئیر مین نے راجستھان کے بارے میں پوچھ لیا ہے۔ میں کنپیرزن بتا دوں، مثلا اندھرا پردیش میں۔

[ ] Transliteration in Urdu Script]
*Not recorded.

श्री सभापति : आंध्र प्रदेश का छोड़िए, आप राजस्थान का बता दीजिए।...(**व्यवधान**)...

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : सर, राजस्थान का मैंने अर्ज किया। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

†**پروفیسر سیف الدین سوز:** سر، راجستھان کا میں نے عرض کیا...مداخلت...

श्री सीताराम येचुरी : सर, क्वैश्चन में आंध्र प्रदेश में 296 मंडल में पानी का स्तर जो है,नीचे गया है। it is one of the worst situation in the whole country.

श्री सभापति : मैंने इसलिए राजस्थान का पूछा है।...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सीताराम येचुरी : राजस्थान में भी सर, 190 ब्लॉकों के अंन्दर पानी का स्तर जो है, नीचे चला गया है

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : यह ब्लॉक्स में कहां कहां है, उसके आंकड़े भी मै दे सकता हूं लेकिन ऑनरेबल चेयरमैंन साहब ने जो राजस्थान का कहा है, मैंने बताया कि साल 2000 में 20 से 40 मीटर तक का पानी 37 प्रतिशत क्षेत्र में मिलता था, जो अब कम होकर 35.64 प्रतिशत रह गया। यह स्थिति है। यहां तक आपने कहा है,मेरे पास इन स्टेटस की फिगर्स है।

†**پروفیسر سیف الدین سوز:** یہ بلاکس میں کہاں کہاں ہیں،اس کے آنکڑے بھی میں دے سکتا ہوں،لیکن آنریبل چئیرمین صاحب نے جو راجستھان کا کہا ہے، میں نے بتایا کہ سال 2000 میں 20 سے 40 میٹر تک پانی ملتا تھا، جو اب یہ لیول گر گیا ہے۔ 25.64 میٹر۔ یہ حالت ہے۔ یہاں تک آپ نے کہا ہے، میرے پاس اسٹیٹس کی فیگرس ہیں۔

श्री सभापति : ठीक है।

डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी : सभापति जी, मेरा निवेदन यह है कि इस सवाल में कुछ छुपाया न जाए क्योकि यह देश के लिए महत्वपूर्ण सवाल है। हम लोग चिंतित है। आप साफ-साफ बात कीजिए। आप मदद करें, देश में पानी का क्या स्रोत है वह बताया जाए वरना अब तो यह कहा जा रहा है कि अगला विश्व युद्ध पानी पर होगा। मुझे चिंता है कि वह कही इसी इलाके में न हो।

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†[Transliteration in Urdu Script]

श्री सभापति : उसकी तैयारी यह कर रहे है। आप चिंता मत करो। ...(व्यवधान)...

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : सर, मेरा अर्ज यह है कि मै कुछ छुपा नही रहा हूं। अब इन-इन स्टेट्स के बारे में वाटर लेवल हम बता रहे थे। अगर ब्लॉक का कहेंगे, तो मै आपको ब्लॉक्स का भी बता सकता हूं।

†**پروفیسر سیف الدین سوز:** سر، میرا عرض یہ ہے کہ میں کچھ چھپا نہیں رہا ہوں۔ اب ان ان اسٹیٹس کے بارے میں واٹر لیول ہم بتا رہے تھے۔ اگر بلاک کا کہیں گے، تو میں آپ کو بلاکس کا بھی بتا سکتا ہوں۔

श्री सभापति : छोड़िए उसका।

प्रो. सैफुद्दीन सोज : किस स्टेट के बारे में आप जानना चाहेंगे?

†**پروفیسر سیف الدین سوز:** کس اسٹیٹس کے بارے میں آپ جاننا چاہیں گے؟

श्री सभापति : आप छोड़िए उसको। पानी की कमी है आप यह मान लीजिए।

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the dwindling of the water table across the country is, indeed, a matter for deep concern, but one of the ways in which it can be counteracted is rain water harvesting. It is a strange irony that billions upon billions of gallons of rain fall every year and yet we are unable to harvest even one per cent of that. So, would the Minister be pleased to tell the House what steps he is taking to ensure and to propagate the importance of rain water harvesting in the urban areas particularly, and make it,.in fact, compulsory for new buildings that are coming up? Huge buildings are coming up. The water is just being wasted. Are you giving any incentives? Are you giving any technology? Are you trying to educate public opinion regarding the importance because unless we do that, Sir, this problem is going to go from bad to worse?

†[Transliteration in Urdu Script]

PROF. SAIF-UD-DTN SOZ: Sir, I am happy that an important question has been asked, but before replying to that, I would say that we have taken action wherever the water table has gone down. We have notified the areas, and have told the States that they cannot draw any more water; a notification has been issued, and further notification will be issued. I am happy that Dr. Karan Singh has raised a question on rainwater harvesting. We have prepared a Model Bill earlier. The response from the hon. Chief Ministers was a little lukewarm, in some States. In the North-East, there is no problem. But I have fought a battle for six months with the Chief Ministers, and finally, I am reporting to this August House that Chief Ministers have responded very favourably except one or two States. I am trying to persuade them to adopt the Model Bill, have a legislation, protect the groundwater and recharge the groundwater in a big way. If you ask what the Chief Ministers have done, I have details for that, and I am conscious that the Chief Ministers should respond, and the whole country should have rainwater harvesting on the routes for drinking water; they must recharge groundwater and rainwater should not be wasted.

Committee on pricing of gas

*184. SHRI AMAR SINGH:††
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have appointed any Committee to go into various aspects of pricing of gas produced under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP);

(b) if so, what is the composition of this Committee; and

(c) whether representatives of other Government Departments were associated in the Committee and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri AmarSingh.